



## Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

February 21, 1996

The Honorable John T. Conway  
Chairman  
Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board  
625 Indiana Avenue, N.W.  
Suite 700  
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Mr. Conway:

Your letter of January 22, 1996, to Assistant Secretary Grumbly, focused our attention on risks associated with radiolytic generation of hydrogen in tanks and pipes at Rocky Flats. The action plan for addressing these concerns is enclosed as requested. Characterization and purging of high fissile content tanks in Building 771 have provided an increased margin of safety. While we continue to improve upon these efforts, we are turning our attention to characterization and purging of the lower fissile content tanks in Building 371 and to potential for pressurization of isolated piping. We have incorporated performance incentives for aggressively instituting this hydrogen safety plan in facility operating and management contracts.

We are further reducing potential hazards by eliminating flammable gases in adherence to code and best practices. Programs are in place to assure that appropriate controls are included in procedures for maintenance and operating activities. Additional and more detailed information have been provided to your staff members at the Rocky Flats site. Updates and changes to the enclosed action plans will be distributed to them informally when approved.

This information is unclassified and suitable for placement in the public reading room.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, which appears to read "W. W. Guimond" or similar, is written over the typed name.

Richard J. Guimond  
Assistant Surgeon General, USPHS  
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary  
for Environmental Management

Enclosure